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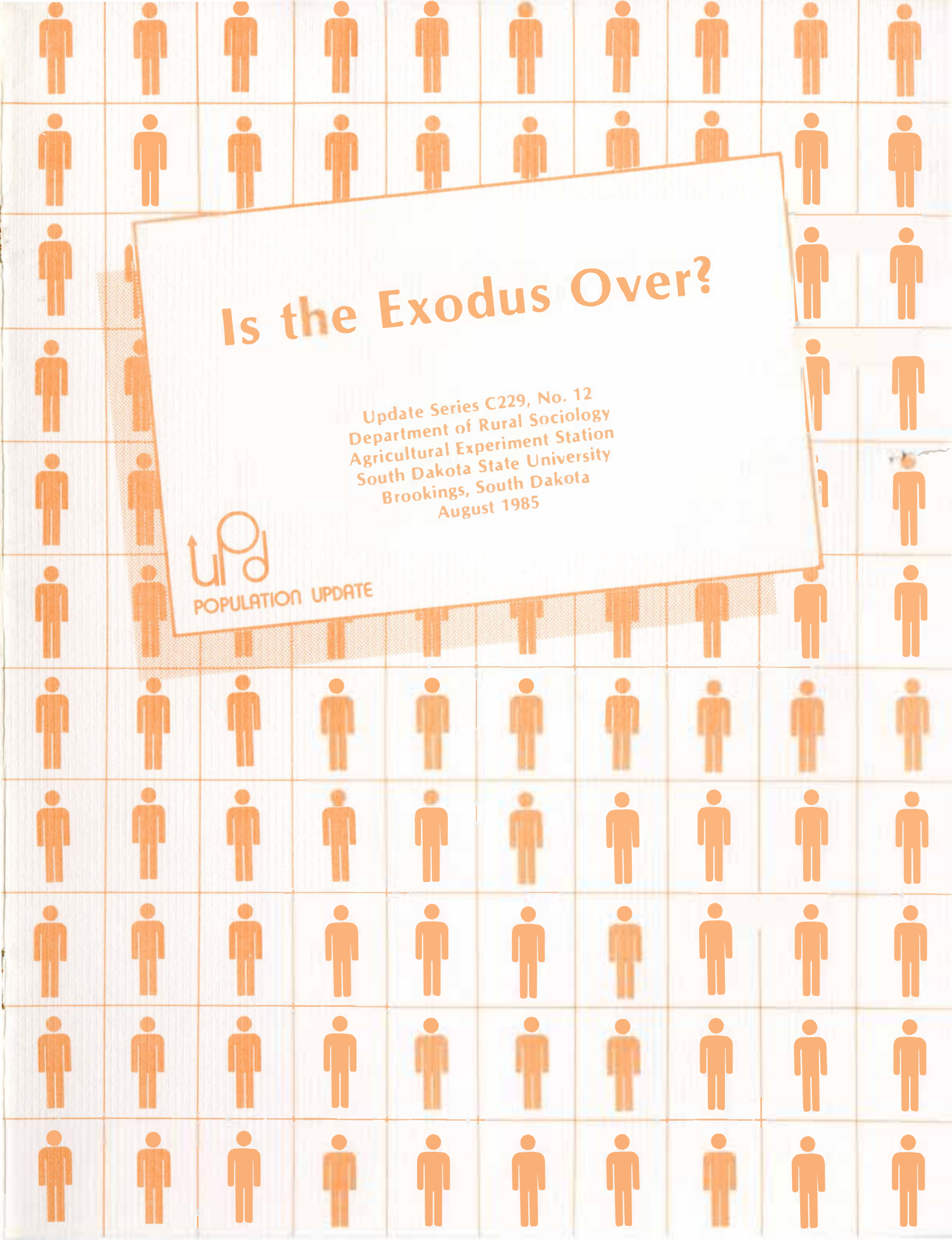

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Update Series C229, No. 12
Department of Rural Sociology
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POPULATION UPDATE

Is the Exodus Over?

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Nearly 14% of all South Dakotans moved out of the state in the 60s. Although that is a big chunk of our population to lose, the bad news was expected; such high rates of out-migration have been recorded every decade since the 1940s. Nearly 200,000 people left the state from 1950 to 1970.

The phenomenon is not peculiar to South Dakota. The exodus from the agricultural heartland of America has been relatively continuous over the past three decades. It has had serious consequences for the people left behind.

Consequently, the good news of the 1970s was a surprise: From the 14% rate of the previous decade, out-migration dropped to only 4%.

A net total of 92,560 people (13.6% of the total population) migrated out of the state in the 1960s. From 1970 to 1980, only 26,384 (4%) more people left the state than moved in.

The major findings in this report are:

1. Migration levels fell sharply from the 1960s to the 1970s in South Dakota.

2. More counties recorded in-migration in the 1970s than in the 1960s.

3. Fewer counties recorded high out-migration in the 1970s than in the 1960s (see Table 1).

The slowdown in population loss did not happen uniformly across the state. Three fourths of the counties continued to record net out-migration, though only 12 counties had higher rates of out-migration in the 1970s than in the 1960s. In many cases, out-migration rates were cut in half.

Continuous high out-migration, a rate over 15% in both decades, was confined mainly to the central part of the state (Map 1).

The first question these data bring up is, "What happened, why the slowdown?" The second is, "is there a difference between the growing and the declining counties?"

Net Migration Patterns

Migration patterns were determined for the two 10-year time periods of the 1960s and 1970s. The counties of South Dakota were categorized as follows:

1. In-migration counties with in-migration for both decades (Table 2).

2. Turnaround counties with out-migration in the 1960s and in-migration in the 1970s (Table 3).

3. Reverse turnaround counties with in-migration in the 1960s and out-migration in the 1970s (Table 4).

4. Out-migration counties with out-migration under 15% for both decades (Table 5).

5. High out-migration counties with 15% or higher rates for both decades (Table 6).

Only one county (Meade) was in the first category of continuous in-migration over the two decades.

Twelve counties were in the turnaround category--that is, the migration pattern "turned around" from one decade to the next. Two counties recorded reverse turnaround.

TABLE 1
NET MIGRATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA COUNTIES, 1970 and 1980

County	Population 1970	Net Migration 1970	Rate Net Migration 1970	Population 1980	Net Migration 1980	Rate Net Migration 1980	Pattern of Net Migration
AURORA	4183	-857	-18.0	3628	-725	-17.3	5
BEADLE	22977	-2607	-12.0	19195	-2617	-12.5	4
BENNETT	3088	-547	-17.9	3044	-432	-14.0	4
BON HOMME	8577	-1151	-12.5	8059	-667	-7.8	4
BROOKINGS	22158	-133	-0.7	24332	437	2.0	2
BROWN	36920	-1448	-4.2	36962	-2829	-7.7	4
BRULE	5870	-1276	-20.2	5245	-987	-16.8	5
BUFFALO	1739	-273	-17.6	1795	-212	-12.2	4
BUTTE	7825	-1506	-17.5	8372	130	1.7	2
CAMPBELL	2866	-1001	-28.3	2243	-677	-23.6	5
CHARLES MIX	9994	-3069	-26.0	9680	-995	-10.0	4
CLARK	5515	-1739	-24.4	4894	-680	-12.3	4
CLAY	12923	790	7.3	13689	-241	-1.9	3
CODINGTON	19140	-2850	-14.1	20885	376	2.0	2
CORSON	4994	-1874	-32.3	5196	-622	-12.5	4
CUSTER	4698	-523	-10.7	6000	1115	23.7	2
DAVISON	17319	-938	-5.6	17820	-611	-3.5	4
DAY	8713	-2198	-20.9	8133	-682	-7.8	4
DEUEL	5686	-1513	-22.3	5289	-485	-8.5	4
DEWEY	5170	-1194	-22.7	5366	-676	-13.1	4
DOUGLAS	4569	-976	-19.1	4181	-561	-12.3	4
EDMUNDS	5548	-1170	-19.2	5159	-622	-11.2	4
FALL RIVER	7505	-3414	-31.9	8439	898	12.0	2
FAULK	3893	-877	-19.9	3327	-619	-15.9	5
GRANT	9005	-1695	-17.1	9013	-362	-4.0	4
GREGORY	6710	-1207	-16.3	6015	-876	-13.1	4
HAAKON	2802	-852	-25.8	2794	-333	-11.9	4
HAMLIN	5520	-1009	-16.0	5261	-274	-5.0	4
HAND	5883	-1476	-22.0	4948	-1130	-19.2	5
HANSON	3781	-1235	-26.9	3415	-585	-15.5	5
HARDING	1855	-710	-30.0	1700	-256	-13.8	4
HUGHES	11632	-2969	-23.3	14220	1103	9.5	2
HUTCHINSON	10379	-1474	-13.3	9350	-1050	-10.1	4
HYDE	2515	-343	-13.2	2069	-545	-21.7	4
JACKSON	2920	-686	-34.6	3437	121	4.1	2
JERAULD	3310	-885	-21.9	2929	-439	-13.3	4
JONES	1882	-424	-20.5	1463	-536	-28.5	5
KINGSBURY	7657	-1912	-20.7	6679	-845	-11.0	4
LAKE	11456	-1196	-10.2	10724	-1247	-10.9	4
LAWRENCE	17453	-1740	-10.2	18339	-264	-1.5	4
LINCOLN	11761	-1109	-9.0	13942	1649	14.0	2
LYMAN	4060	-879	-19.9	3864	-587	-14.5	4
MCCOOK	7246	-1575	-19.1	6444	-843	-11.6	4
MCPHERSON	5022	-1180	-20.3	4027	-1004	-20.0	4
MARSHALL	5965	-1178	-17.7	5404	-567	-9.5	4
MEADE	17020	3285	27.3	20717	1762	10.4	1
MELLETTE	2420	-650	-24.4	2249	-430	-17.8	5
MINER	4454	-1179	-21.8	3739	-717	-16.1	5
MINNEHAHA	95209	-4467	-5.2	109435	5396	5.7	2
MOODY	7622	-1605	-18.2	6692	-1108	-14.5	4
PENNINGTON	59349	-12498	-21.5	70361	147	2.5	2
PERKINS	4769	-1595	-26.7	4700	-239	-5.0	4
POTTER	4449	-1223	-24.8	3674	-984	-22.1	5
ROBERTS	11678	-2811	-21.3	10911	-1433	-12.3	4
SANBORN	3697	-1137	-24.5	3213	-528	-14.3	4
SHANNON	8198	-100	-1.7	11323	981	12.0	2
SPINK	10595	-1727	-14.8	9201	-1594	-15.0	4
STANLEY	2457	-2231	-54.6	2533	-196	-8.0	4
SULLY	2362	-609	-23.4	1990	-576	-24.4	5
TODD	6606	682	14.6	7328	-790	-12.0	3
TRIPP	8171	-1604	-18.3	7268	-1477	-18.1	5
TURNER	9872	-1589	-14.2	9255	-473	-4.8	4
UNION	9643	-1216	-11.9	10938	638	6.6	2
WALWORTH	7842	-1197	-14.8	7011	-1227	-15.6	4
WASHABAUGH	1387	80	7.7	*	*	*	*
YANKTON	19039	-319	-1.8	18952	-1379	-7.2	4
ZIEBACH	2221	-772	-30.9	2308	-303	-13.6	4

The largest number of counties (39) recorded out-migration in both decades, but in the low to moderate range.

Twelve counties were in the high out-migration category.

Turnaround counties included Brookings, Butte, Codington, Custer, Fall River, Hughes, Jackson, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Pennington, Shannon, and Union.

Continuous decline counties were mainly in the middle of the state and included Aurora, Brule, Campbell, Faulk, Hand, Hanson, Jones, Mellette, Miner, Potter, Sully, and Tripp.

The differences between the turnaround or growing counties and the high out-migration counties give us some preliminary answers to the question of what happened to slow out-migration so dramatically. These differences deal with "quality of life."

Quality of Life

Nationally, the countryside was rediscovered in the 1970s. Seeking something they perhaps couldn't define, people have been returning to rural areas.

This rural renaissance resulted in a slowing and even, in many areas of the country, a reversal of the long-term migratory trend from rural to urban areas. Nearly three fourths of all non-metropolitan counties in the U.S. gained population during the 1970s.

The impact was felt even in South Dakota, although not to the same degree as in less agricultural states.

Paradoxically, people are returning to the country because rural life is becoming less "rural" and more cosmopolitan. Advances in technology, communications, and transportation have blurred the dis-

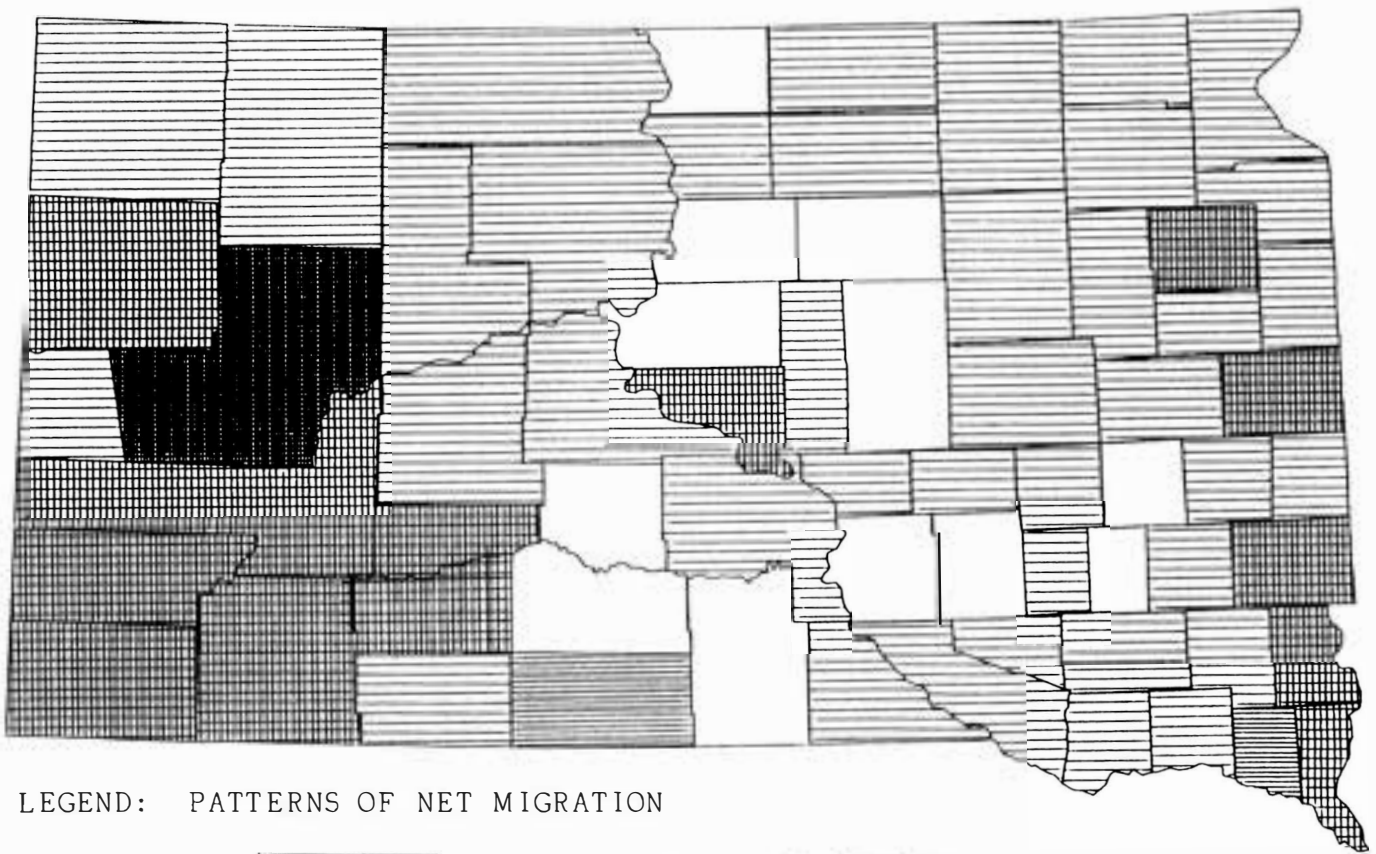

TABLE 2

In-Migration Counties in South Dakota, 1960's and 1970's.*

	Net Migration Rate 1960-1970	Net Migration Rate 1970-1980
Meade	27.3	10.4

*Counties with in-migration for 1970 and 1980.

TABLE 3

Turnaround Migration Counties in South Dakota, 1960's and 1970's.*

	Net Migration Rate 1960-1970	Net Migration Rate 1970-1980
Brookings	- 0.7	2.0
Butte	-17.5	1.7
Codington	-14.1	2.0
Custer	-10.7	23.7
Fall River	-31.9	12.0
Hughes	-23.3	9.5
Jackson	-34.6	4.1
Lincoln	- 9.0	14.0
Minnehaha	- 5.2	5.7
Pennington	-21.5	2.5
Shannon	- 1.7	12.0
Union	-11.9	6.6

*Counties with out-migration in 1970 but in-migration in 1980.

TABLE 4

Reverse Turnaround Counties in South Dakota, 1960's to 1970's.*

	Net Migration Rate 1960-1970	Net Migration Rate 1970-1980
Clay	7.3	- 1.9
Todd	14.6	-12.0

*Counties with in-migration in 1970 and out-migration in 1980.

tinction between rural and urban. There is renewed interest in extractive industries such as mining and oil, and there is a favorable investment climate in many rural areas. There are also recreational opportunities and that elusive "high quality of life."

It has been determined that people come for all these reasons and that they stay in rural areas for the same reasons (Morrison and Wheeler, 1976).

While quality of life evades definition, researchers are able to use indicators to describe and compare the ways people live. Indicators range from birth and death rates to economic and social factors, and even the amount of pollution in an area.

We can use certain of these indicators to quantify the differences between turnaround and high out-migration counties in South Dakota.

Population Factors

Age is significant. More young people move than do people in other age categories; the young are seeking educational and employment opportunities.

Just how many young people have left the state is indicated by age-specific net out-migration rates. In the 60s decade, 20,175 (29.9%) of the 20-24 age group migrated out of the state. A net 17,054 (32.5%) of the 25-29 age group also left.

In contrast, in the 70s decade, 7,250 (9.7%) of the 20-24 age group and 11,980 (17.1%) of the 25-29 age group left the state, a considerable decline in out-migration within these categories (Goreham, Goss, and Wagner, 1984, 5).

Characteristics most related to net migration patterns include several measurements of how the population is aging.

One such measure is the index of aging, or aged-to-child ratio. The ratio indicates the number of persons over age 65 per 100 persons under age 15. A ratio under 15 is considered a characteristic of a young population, while one over 30 is considered old.

In the high out-migration counties, the ratio was steady and high, ranging from 39 in Mellette to 102 in Miner. There is a larger proportion of older people than younger people in these counties.

The turnaround counties showed less of a pattern, ranging from a low of 13 in Shannon to a high of 76 in Fall River. The Fall River figure is an anomaly; excluding it brought the range to 13 to 60. Twenty-five percent of the turnaround counties were under 30; all of the high out-migration counties were over 30.

Remember that the index of aging is a ratio of older to younger people. Even when a county registers more older people than the average, it may also have a higher number of younger people as well.

The median age is another measure of aging. It represents the age at which the population may be divided into two equal halves with one half on the younger side and one half on the older side. Populations with a median age under 20 may be considered "young," while a population over 30 is considered "old." Those between 20 and 29 are intermediate.

Median age is affected by migration, as young adults are the most likely to migrate. In the 1970s, the high out-migration counties had a median age ranging from 26 in Mellette to 40 in Miner. All but Mellette registered a median age over 30.

The turnaround counties ranged from 19 in Shannon to 35 in Fall River. All but Fall River registered under 31.

Generally, declining counties have a relatively older population and growing counties have a younger population.

The age-dependency ratio shows how many people are under 15 and over 65 in relation to the number of economically ac-

tive people in the age group 15 to 64. For example, a ratio of 40 would indicate there are 40 persons age 15 to 64 for every 100 persons under 15 and over 65.

The high out-migration counties had a range in the age-dependency ratio from a low of 20 in Mellette to a high of 39 in Miner. Turnaround counties registered a low of 9 in Shannon to a high of 29 in Fall River, reflecting a more economically active population.

Further evidence for this is the young adult ratio, defined as the proportion of people aged 15 to 34 in relation to the total population. The high out-migration counties had a range of 33 young adults in Miner to 47 in Mellette in relation to the total population.

The turnaround counties ranged from 39 in Fall River to 92 in Brookings. Although the Brookings county figure is weighted partially by the university population, the comparison between growing and declining counties still holds. Excluding Brookings, the range is 39 to 68, which is still higher than the declining counties.

These four criteria give some indication of whether a population is aging or not; together they begin to answer one of our questions--is there a difference between gaining and losing counties.

Social and Economic Factors

These factors include types of employment, poverty, income, and educational data.

Employment in the high out-migration counties declined in every case but one (Brule) from 1970 to 1980. The turnaround counties had employment increases in all but one county (Jackson).

The percent of persons employed in farm related work tended to be relatively low in turnaround counties. High out-migration counties in the 1970s had a range from 21% working in farm employment in Brule to 50% in Campbell. Most of the turnaround counties had under 15% employed in agriculture in 1970; these counties also recorded significant declines in those employed in agriculture from 1970 to 1980.

Counties losing population had high increases in the number of people below poverty level.[1] Campbell, Faulk, Hanson, Mellette, and Miner counties all had 30% of their populations below the poverty level in 1980; only Mellette had more than 30% in poverty in 1970. Other declining counties had percentages between 18 and 25% below the poverty level in 1980.

The majority of the growing counties ranged from 7% below poverty in Hughes to 19% in Fall River. Two reservation counties registered higher rates, including Jackson at 36% and Shannon at 45%.

The national average is 15% below the poverty level. In fact, of the 10 poorest counties in the U.S. in 1980, four were in South Dakota (U.S. News & World Report, October 18, 1982). They were (with per capita income in 1980 in parentheses) Shannon ($2637), Buffalo ($2642), Ziebach ($3042), and Todd ($3159).

Per capita income increased in all counties from 1970 to 1980, but the increases were much larger in turnaround counties.

An additional significant finding dealt with education--the number of teachers in each county. There were both far more teachers and gains in their numbers in all turnaround counties. Declines in the number of teachers in all but four of the high out-migration counties reflected the loss of young people.

The main differences between the two sets of counties are summarized as fol-

[1]Poverty level is determined by comparing the income of the person or family with an appropriate figure in a series of income levels established by the federal Social Security Administration and adjusted annually in accordance with changes in the Consumer Price Index.

lows: Those counties experiencing declines in population have an older population reflected in an older median age, fewer young adults, and higher dependency ratios. Those counties with growing populations have younger people with more children and more young adults, as shown by the younger median age.

The key social factor was employment. Those counties experiencing declines in population have lower employment rates, proportionately more people in agricultural jobs, fewer businesses, lower and slower growing per-capita incomes, and more people below the poverty level.

Only one county of the turnaround group (Jackson) experienced a decline in numbers employed. All but two counties in

TABLE 5
Out-migration counties in South Dakota, 1970 to 1980.*

	Net Migration Rate 1960-1970	Net Migration Rate 1970-1980
Beadle	-12.0	-12.5
Bennett	-17.9	-14.0
Bon Homme	-12.5	- 7.8
Brown	- 4.2	- 7.7
Buffalo	-17.6	-12.2
Charles Mix	-26.0	-10.0
Clark	-24.4	-12.4
Corson	-32.3	-12.5
Davison	- 5.6	- 3.5
Day	-20.9	- 7.8
Duel	-22.3	- 8.5
Dewey	-22.7	-13.1
Douglas	-19.1	-12.3
Edmunds	-19.2	-11.2
Grant	-17.1	- 4.0
Gregory	-16.3	-13.1
Haakon	-25.8	-11.9
Hamlin	-16.0	- 5.0
Harding	-30.0	-13.8
Hutchinson	-13.3	-10.1
Hyde	-13.2	-21.7
Jerauld	-21.9	-13.3
Kingsbury	-20.7	-11.0
Lake	-10.2	-10.9
Lawrence	-10.2	- 1.5
McCook	-19.1	-11.6
Marshall	-17.7	- 9.5
Perkins	-26.7	- 5.0
Roberts	-21.3	-12.3
Sanborn	-24.5	-14.3
Spink	-14.8	-15.0
Stanley	-54.6	- 8.0
Turner	-14.2	- 4.8
Walworth	-14.8	-15.6
Yankton	- 1.8	- 7.2
Ziebach	-30.9	-13.6

*Counties that lost less than 15 percent of population, 1970 or 1980.

TABLE 6

High Net Out-Migration Counties in South Dakota, 1970 and 1980.*

	Net Migration Rate 1960-1970	Net Migration Rate 1970-1980
Aurora	-18.0	-17.3
Brule	-20.2	-16.8
Campbell	-28.3	-23.6
Faulk	-19.9	-15.9
Hand	-22.0	-19.2
Hanson	-26.9	-15.5
Jones	-20.5	-28.5
Mellette	-24.4	-17.8
Miner	-21.8	-16.1
Potter	-24.8	-22.1
Sully	-23.4	-24.4
Tripp	-18.3	-18.1

*Counties with over 15 percent out-migration, 1970 and 1980.

the high out-migration group (Brule and Potter) experienced declines.

Farm employment was especially signficant. Most of the state is experiencing a decline in farm employment. The rate of decline in turnaround counties ranged from 4 to 44%, with most over 30%. Two counties in the high out-migration group (Hanson and Jones) gained farm workers, but the rest of the group declined 4 to 23%. This was a lower rate of decline in agricultural employment than in the turnaround counties.

In summary, those counties showing growth have more employment, fewer farm related workers, higher and faster growing per-capita incomes, and fewer people below the poverty level.

Conclusions

Because South Dakota lost less population in the last decade than in the three previous ones, two sets of counties--those growing and those declining in population--need to make new plans for their futures, providing that this slowdown in out-migration is the beginning of a pattern.

The growing counties are characterized by a younger population with more employment, less farm employment, more service and wholesale jobs, more businesses, a higher per-capita income, and less poverty.

As these counties continue to grow, there will be more demand for educational services, housing, utilities, recreation, police protection, and governmental services. Such counties must make plans to meet the needs of families and a younger population.

The declining counties need to plan differently.

The highly agricultural areas continue to experience high out-migration and are characterized by an older population. They have more unemployment, lower per-capita income, more poverty, and fewer children and young adults.

These agricultural counties will most likely need to attract alternative industries. In addition, social needs will change substantially to emphasize on

facilities for children to those for the elderly. New problems will arise as older people become ill or disabled, poor, lonely, and isolated from other family members.

The exodus is definitely not over. It has slowed down. It means that we have a change in population composition and trends. Our plans for the future of South Dakota may also need to change.

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